

East Palestine, Ohio, Train Derailment

No Environmental Impacts Expected in Missouri

This fact sheet provides some basic information in response to concerns about possible environmental impacts in Missouri from the Feb. 3 train derailment and chemical release in East Palestine, Ohio.

Summary: Based on current information that is publicly available and on environmental factors such as distance, time and dilution, Missouri's water and air quality should not be affected by chemicals released during the train derailment in Ohio.

Water Quality

The Ohio River does not enter the Mississippi River until well south of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, at Cairo, Illinois. Because of the distance from Missouri, the limited mobility of these plumes through groundwater, the dilution factor in surface water from the Ohio River and the Mississippi River as well as the direction of prevailing winds, the train derailment and subsequent chemical release is not anticipated to have any public health or environmental impacts in Missouri.

However, the Department of Natural Resources, through our Public Drinking Water Branch, is responsible for monitoring the safety of drinking water served by all public water supplies throughout the state. In doing so, we routinely test water samples for a wide variety of chemical compounds including vinyl chloride (the main chemical released in the Ohio train derailment). If Missouri water supplies were to become impacted by contamination from the incident in Ohio, it would be reflected in water sampling results.

Public water supplies are required to report any sampling results showing contaminant detections to their customers in their annual consumer confidence reports. The department makes all these reports available through our Consumer Confidence Report website at dnrservices.mo.gov/ccr/index.html. Use the county drop down at the bottom of the page to locate your water providers report.

It is worth noting that consumer confidence reports only contain the most recent sample results for the previous calendar year or monitoring period(s). Anyone who is interested in reviewing additional recent sample result data (including all historical results) can access the department's Drinking Water Watch website at dnr.mo.gov/DWW/DNRLogin.jsp.

Air Quality

Air quality impacts in Missouri from the East Palestine, Ohio, train derailment incident are unlikely because the event occurred several hundred miles away. Atmospheric dispersion of pollutant concentrations over this distance and time will reduce concentrations of pollutants in downwind areas. EPA is conducting air monitoring as part of its response to the incident and is reporting results at response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=15933.

The department monitors for certain toxins in ambient air at the Blair Street monitoring station in St. Louis City. Vinyl chloride is one of the pollutants monitored at this site. Air samples from the Blair Street site are analyzed by a laboratory and monthly results are typically available after six weeks. Validated data from the National Air Toxics Trends Stations sites can be downloaded from EPA's Air Data website at epa.gov/outdoor-air-quality-data/interactive-map-air-quality-monitors.